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Viewing cable 06BUENOSAIRES1610, ARGENTINA: KIRCHNER INSIDER ON GOA POLICY IN THE

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BUENOSAIRES1610	2006-07-20 14:39	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Buenos Aires

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1361157-la-relacion-con-chavez-al-desnudo>

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PP RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHQU RUEHTM RUEHVC
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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: KIRCHNER INSIDER ON GOA POLICY IN THE
REGION

REF: 05 BUENOS AIRES 00141

Classified By: CDA, a.i., Hugo Llorens, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On July 5, the DCM paid a farewell call on
Secretary General of the Presidency (President Nestor

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Kirchner's chief of staff) Oscar Parrilli that included a
frank discussion on GOA policy in the region. Attempting to
clarify Kirchner's recent comments about the U.S. in Madrid,

Parrilli said that Argentina valued U.S. support during the crisis and that Kirchner wanted a ""mature"" relationship with the United States. Parrilli's comments reflected the view that the GOA accepts the idea of the U.S. leadership in the region, as long as it also benefits Argentina. The DCM raised the issue of Venezuela, stating that Kirchner's close relationship with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Chavez's threats against democracy, as well as his penchant for slandering President Bush and the USG made it difficult for the Embassy to maintain constructive bilateral relations with the GOA. Parrilli responded by saying the GOA's relationship with the GOV was based primarily on economics and Mercosur. The DCM next turned the discussion to Bolivia, expressing the U.S. concern that Bolivian President Evo Morales needs to respect Bolivia's constitutional democracy and cooperate with the U.S. and regional neighbors to control narcotics trafficking. Parrilli said that the GOA shares the U.S. goal of ensuring President Evo Morales operates within a democratic framework and said that the two nations should be very clear with Morales on counternarcotics. On the whole question of hemispheric free trade, the DCM noted the U.S. view that the Summit of the Americas was a success in the sense that a majority of the region -- 29 countries -- said that they wanted to continue discussions about creating an FTAA. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On July 5, the DCM paid a farewell call on Secretary General of the Presidency Oscar Parrilli that included a frank discussion on GOA policy in the region. Oscar Parrilli, President Nestor Kirchner's chief of staff, is a key Kirchner insider (See Reftel). Parrilli has been a good contact of the Embassy and is known for his calm disposition, although he clearly shares the world view of the rest of Kirchner's inner circle. Parrilli began the discussion by remarking on the good personal relations the Casa Rosada has enjoyed over the past three years with the Ambassador and DCM. The DCM highlighted the strong background of incoming Ambassador Wayne and corrected the misperception expressed by some members of the GOA that Ambassador Wayne had praised former President Carlos Menem during his recent confirmation hearings.

13. (C) Attempting to clarify Kirchner's recent comments about the U.S. in Madrid, Parrilli said that Argentina valued U.S. support during the crisis and that Kirchner wanted a ""mature"" relationship with the United States. ""President Kirchner has acknowledged this publicly in the past. Despite our differences, the U.S. has come to Argentina's aid when Argentina really needed it." Parrilli said that Argentina, in turn, can help ensure ""tranquillity"" in the region. He said that at times in the past, the U.S. has not played the leadership role necessary in the region. Parrilli said that Kirchner was referring to this ""historic debt"" of the U.S. in

the region, not necessarily about current U.S. policy. ""What Kirchner wants is a 'mature' relationship with the U.S.""

Parrilli further commented that ""what crashed in 2001 was not the de la Rua government, but an economic model. The model of having your economy owned by foreign interests. Countries need to be able to defend their rights, their economy.""

(COMMENT: Parrilli's comments reflect the GOA view that they acknowledge and accept the idea of the U.S. as the natural leader of the region, but they want that leadership to act in Argentina's and the region's interests. In particular, he mentioned that the GOA would like to see more U.S. economic assistance to the region. END COMMENT.)

¶4. (C) The DCM raised the issue of Venezuela, stating that Kirchner's close relationship with Venezuelan President Hugo

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Chavez and Chavez's threats against democracy, as well as his penchant for slandering President Bush and the USG made it difficult for the Embassy to maintain constructive bilateral relations with the GOA. The DCM said, ""One day Kirchner is meeting with Chavez, and Chavez may be on good behavior because Kirchner has asked Chavez to avoid incidents, but the next day Chavez is calling President Bush a drunkard, a genocidal maniac and worse than Hitler."" The DCM said that by so closely associating himself with a leader like Chavez, Kirchner risks being viewed by Washington as sharing Chavez's views.

¶5. (C) Parrilli responded by saying that the GOA's relationship with the GOV was based primarily on economics and Mercosur. Parrilli also said that the GOA does not agree ""with the message or the style of Chavez's attacks on President Bush or the U.S." " Parrilli added, ""Our relationship with Venezuela is not an axis. Argentina and Brazil are the two main drivers of regional integration in South America. We need to include the other big countries in the region -- Venezuela, Colombia, and Chile -- in this process." "

¶6. (C) The DCM next turned the discussion to Bolivia, expressing the U.S. concern that Bolivian President Evo Morales needs to respect Bolivia's constitutional democracy and cooperate with the U.S. and regional neighbors to control narcotrafficking. Parrilli said that the GOA shares the U.S. goal of ensuring President Evo Morales operates within a democratic framework. Parrilli said that Morales is defending and respecting the rights of the mainly indigenous voters that elected him, who have been excluded from the Bolivian political system until now. Parrilli added that ""we have to hope that Morales is successful." " The DCM noted the

concern that the recent increase in Bolivian coca production will lead to an increase in cocaine trafficking. Parrilli agreed that the two nations should be very clear with Morales on counternarcotics.

17. (C) On the whole question of hemispheric free trade, the DCM noted the U.S. view that the Summit of the Americas was a success in the sense that a majority of the region -- 29 countries -- said that they wanted to continue discussions about creating an FTAA. The DCM said that the Mercosur objections to the FTAA over agricultural issues at least leaves room for discussion, while Venezuela was the only country in the region to object to the FTAA on ideological grounds. Parrilli responded by saying, ""In the past what you were offering us in terms of free trade deals was not what Argentina needed." The DCM pointed to the benefits of free trade and noted that NAFTA is no longer an issue for the left or the right in both Canada and Mexico. ""NAFTA has been a win-win for all countries involved.""

COMMENT

18. (C) Oscar Parrilli shares the leftist world view of most of Kirchner's inner circle, but like other Casa Rosada insiders, always appears friendly and cooperative in private to Embassy officials. Parrilli clearly received the official talking points on how to respond to questions about Kirchner's recent statements on the U.S. in Madrid and on GOA relations with Venezuela, as we have heard Parrilli's comments on these two issues repeated on several recent occasions by high-level GOA officials. This continues a long pattern in the Kirchner administration where GOA officials tell us what they think we want to hear in private, while Kirchner's actions and public statements project a different image to the rest of the world.

19. (C) Although Kirchner's inner circle may not diverge from the official line, engaging them is beneficial. Messages given to them are immediately conveyed to President Kirchner, and Kirchner uses them to deliver his message to the USG. With President Kirchner often inaccessible and relying on an

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ever-shrinking group of close advisors, engaging Kirchner's inner circle is often the best way to maintain a dialogue with the GOA. We believe it would be far worse for U.S. interests to discontinue dialogue with some of the only people that can still influence Kirchner. END COMMENT.

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=====CABLE ENDS=====

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